

## Summit 2012 Overview

On October 31, 2012, around **350 people** gathered at Florida State University's Turnbull Conference Center to experience a day devoted to creating a stronger, more sustainable community. These people were participants in the Sustainable Communities Summit 2012 sponsored by Leon County. The theme of the summit was **"Collaboration for a more resilient community,"** and the day's events reinforced that motif with opportunities for learning and sharing throughout the day that emphasized local knowledge and resources.

Attendees learned practical tips, heard from nationally recognized speakers, and toured exhibits. A broad spectrum of community members was in attendance, from students to civic leaders. Participants contributed to creating a report filled with "best ideas" for moving the community forward to improvements in sustainability for water, energy, waste, transportation, and food. **Leon County Administrator Vincent S. Long** applauded citizens for their involvement. "It is engaged people like you that shape this community into the place we call home," he said.

The event encompassed 42 presenters in 16 panel sessions on topics from composting to beekeeping, community garden organization to nature discovery.

The event began with a rousing performance by the **African Caribbean Dance Theater**.



***Dancers with the African Caribbean Dance Theater dazzled the audience at their morning performance.***

The first plenary session was a videoconference on groundbreaking ideas from futurist and economist **Hazel Henderson**. Henderson described how a "green economic transition" is underway, as evidenced by an investment of more than \$3.6 trillion internationally in private sector investments in renewable energy, green construction, smart grid technology, and energy efficiency. Ms. Henderson explains more about her ideas in her book, ***Ethical Markets: Growing the Green Economy*** (2006, Chelsea Green Publishing) and at her website: <http://www.ethicalmarkets.com/>.

Morning break-out sessions included presentations on keys to success for community gardens, practical ideas for having a greener home, and an update on regulations pertaining to small farms.



***Leon County Extension Director Kendra Zamojski shares ideas for making non-toxic and effective cleaning solutions from simple ingredients at her station for the 'Greener Home' Expo break-out session***

A standing-room only crowd listened intently to the luncheon speaker, **Janisse Ray**, who issued a call to revive the practice of saving and growing seeds from backyard gardens and farms in order to maintain food diversity. Read more in her new book, ***The Seed Underground: A Growing Revolution to Save Food*** (2012, Chelsea Green Publishing).



***Author Janisse Ray urges the audience to save seeds, plant seeds, and "Farmer Up!"***

Afternoon session topics included creative reuse for home furnishings and reducing carbon footprints. Exhibits ranged from displays from local plant nurseries to an alternative transportation exposition that included a one-of-a-kind solar car created by Florida State University and Florida A & M University engineers.

The afternoon concluded with a presentation of participant-submitted “best ideas” for sustainability. These ideas from citizens included offering rebates for promoting use of rainwater cisterns with rebates, expanding use of solar energy on public buildings, creating a community seed catalog, expanding bicycle lanes and paths, and taxing plastic bags.

The event was organized and hosted by Leon County as a component of its ongoing sustainability program.



***Community leaders report back on the “best ideas” generated by the group at the event.***